

CLAIMS:

1. A guide block for use in surgery to locate a surgical tool accurately relative to an anatomical feature, which comprises a fixation part which can be fastened directly to the patient's tissue, and a guide part having at least one structural feature to engage a surgical tool to ensure that the tool is located appropriately relative to the patient's tissue, the guide part being mounted on the fixation part, the guide block including at least two drives for adjusting the position of the guide part relative to the fixation part, so that the position of the guide part relative to the fixation part can be adjusted in at least two degrees of freedom.
2. A guide block as claimed in claim 1, which includes at least three drives for adjusting the position of the guide part relative to the fixation part, so that the position of the guide part relative to the fixation part can be adjusted in at least three degrees of freedom.
3. A guide block as claimed in claim 1, in which the fixation part of the guide block includes a housing which is hollow, and in which the drives are located inside the housing.
4. A guide block as claimed in claim 1, in which the guide block includes connector shafts which extend from the fixation part to the guide part, which are moved relative to the fixation part by respective ones of the drives to cause the location of the guide part to be adjusted.
5. A guide block as claimed in claim 1, in which the fixation part includes means for adjusting the drives which are accessible from outside the housing.
6. A guide block as claimed in claim 1, in which the structural feature comprises a guide surface which can be engaged by a blade to define the appropriate alignment for a cut.

7. A guide block as claimed in claim 1, in which the structural feature comprises an opening in which a drill bit can be inserted.

8. A guide block as claimed in claim 1, in which the fixation part has at least one opening extending through it in which a fastener can be located for fixing the part to the patient's tissue.

9. A guide block as claimed in claim 8, in which the fixation part has a plurality of openings extending through it in which fasteners can be located for fixing the part to the patient's tissue.

10. A guide block as claimed in claim 1, in which the drive includes at least one threaded shaft on one of the fixation part and the guide part, and a threaded bore in the other of the fixation part and the guide part in which the threaded shaft can be received, in which the position of the guide part relative to the fixation part can be adjusted by rotating the shaft relative to the bore.

11. A guide block as claimed in claim 10, in which the drive includes a knob which can be engaged manually to cause relative rotation between the shaft and the bore.

12. A guide block as claimed in claim 10, which includes an electric motor for causing relative rotation between the shaft and the bore.

13. A guide block as claimed in claim 10, which includes a flexible drive shaft which can be connected to the guide part, through which rotational motion can be imparted to the guide part from a remote location to cause relative rotation between the shaft and the bore.

14. A guide block as claimed in claim 1, which includes at least one position indicator which is fixed relative to the guide part, and at least one position monitor for tracking the location of the position indicator, so that the position of the guide part relative to a reference point can be determined.

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15. A drive system for use in surgery, which includes guide block as claimed in claim 14, and a signal generator which is connected to the drive, for generating position signals which are transmitted to the drive to cause the guide part to move relative to the fixation part.